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the FOWL TICK

how to control it



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the FOWL TICK

how to control it

The fowl tick,¹ also called the bluebug or chicken tick, injures poultry by sucking blood. It prefers chickens, but it also attacks other poultry, chiefly turkeys.

This pest occurs mostly in Southern States, particularly where annual rainfall is light, as in the Southwest. It sometimes occurs in more humid, cooler States, to which it is carried in the shipment of infested poultry and crates.

The fowl tick can be controlled by following good sanitation practices, and by spraying with insecticides.

NATURE OF INJURY

The blood sucking of fowl ticks causes poultry to be unthrifty, to lose weight, and to lay fewer eggs. Heavy infestations of ticks sometimes kill fowls and often cause setting hens to desert their nests.

Chickens infested with ticks show weakness in the legs, droopiness of the wings, and loss of appetite; they have pale combs and wattles.

HOW FOWL TICKS DEVELOP

Fowl ticks lay brownish, spherical eggs in cracks and rough places of poultry houses or roosting areas. In warm weather, the eggs hatch

in about 2 weeks; in cool weather they hatch in 2 or 3 months.

When the eggs hatch, the young ticks, or larvae, attach themselves to poultry. They gather in places where feathers are sparse—under wings and on thighs and neck. They remain on the fowls about a week, sucking blood. Then they drop off at night, while the fowls are on the roost, and seek a hiding place. They are about $\frac{1}{10}$ inch long and are blue or purplish.

After a few days the larvae molt to the next stage: They become nymphs. The nymphs also attach themselves to fowls, and feed; but they remain attached only a few minutes at a time. After each feeding they drop off and seek a hiding place. Each nymph feeds two or three times, and molts several days after each meal. After the final molt, the ticks become adults. Adults feed several times, for a few minutes each time, and females lay eggs after each meal. The female may lay up to 900 eggs in a number of batches. Adults are $\frac{1}{5}$ to nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long.

HOW TO DETECT THEM

Fowl ticks are not easily noticed because adults and nymphs hide during the day in cracks and crevices of poultry houses and come out only at night to suck blood.

¹ *Argas sp.*

Usually you don't know they are around until your flock shows marked symptoms of attack.

It is easier to look for masses of ticks in cracks and rough spots, or under loose pieces of bark or boards about the roosts, than it is to find them on fowls. You can sometimes see the larval ticks as small, dark objects attached to the skin.

Spots of black excrement where ticks are hiding is another clue to their presence.

CONTROL METHODS

Once established in a poultry house, or in outdoor roosts, fowl ticks are difficult to control. Removal of fowls from infested areas is not a practicable way to get rid of the ticks, which can live as long as 2 years without feeding.

Spraying With Insecticides

Several sprays may be used against fowl ticks, but success depends on how thoroughly the materials are applied.

A spray containing 3 percent of malathion or 1 percent of Rabon will control fowl ticks. Apply it to roosts and to the interior of poultry houses and coops, at a rate of 1 gallon to cover an area of 100 to 150 square feet. Pay particular attention to cracks, crevices, and rough spots where ticks may be hiding.

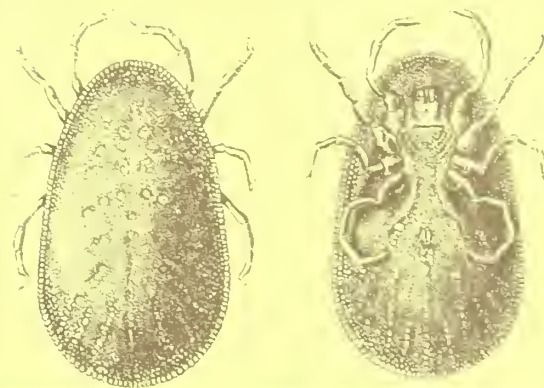
Make a spray by mixing a wettable powder or an emulsifiable concentrate with water. The accompanying table shows the amount of the purchased product to use for the mixture you want.

Thorough coverage with the spray is essential. Repeated treatments may be necessary.

THE FOWL TICK: Nymph



THE FOWL TICK: Adult female



Spraying roosts to control fowl ticks



GUIDE FOR PREPARING SPRAYS

PURCHASED PRODUCT	Amount of product to mix with 1 gallon of water*	
	Wettable powder	Emulsifiable concentrate
Malathion, 50-percent		7.5 to 10 fluid ounces
Rabon, 50-percent	2.5 ounces (5 tbsp.)	
Rabon, 25-percent		6 fluid ounces

*Will cover an area of 100 to 150 square feet.

A small power sprayer is the most effective device for applying sprays. You may use a garden-type compressed-air sprayer; but if you are applying a wettable-powder spray, shake the sprayer often to keep the powder in suspension in the spray mixture.

Sanitation and Management

Use roosts and nests of the knock-down type for easier cleaning and spraying.

Eliminate hiding places of ticks by removing loose boards and rubbish.

Do not permit fowls to roost in trees, livestock sheds, and similar unsuitable places. Provide a modern, well-ventilated poultry house and keep it clean.

The poultry house should be sprayed at least twice a year, including the roosts.

PRECAUTIONS

Pesticides used improperly can be injurious to man, animals, and plants. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the labels.

Store pesticides in original containers under lock and key—out of the reach of children and animals—and away from food and feed.

Apply pesticides so that they do

not endanger humans, livestock, crops, beneficial insects, fish, and wildlife.

Avoid prolonged inhalation of pesticide sprays or dusts: wear protective clothing and equipment if specified on the container.

If your hands become contaminated with a pesticide, do not eat or drink until you have washed. In case a pesticide is swallowed or gets in the eyes, follow the first aid treatment given on the label, and get prompt medical attention. If a pesticide is spilled on your skin or clothing, remove clothing immediately and wash skin thoroughly.

Do not clean spray equipment or dump excess spray material near ponds, streams, or wells.

Dispose of empty pesticide containers promptly. Have them buried at a sanitary land-fill dump, or crush and bury them in a level, isolated place.

NOTE: Some States have restrictions on the use of certain pesticides. Check your State and local regulations. Also, because registrations of pesticides are under constant review by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, consult your county agricultural agent or State Extension specialist to be sure the intended use is still registered.

Prepared by
Southern Region
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All copies of this publication issued before January, 1974, should be destroyed. Editions before that date contain suggested uses of certain pesticides whose Federal registration has been withdrawn.

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